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A
Thanksgiving
S E R M O N

Upon *Thursday* the Sixteenth
of *April*, 1696.

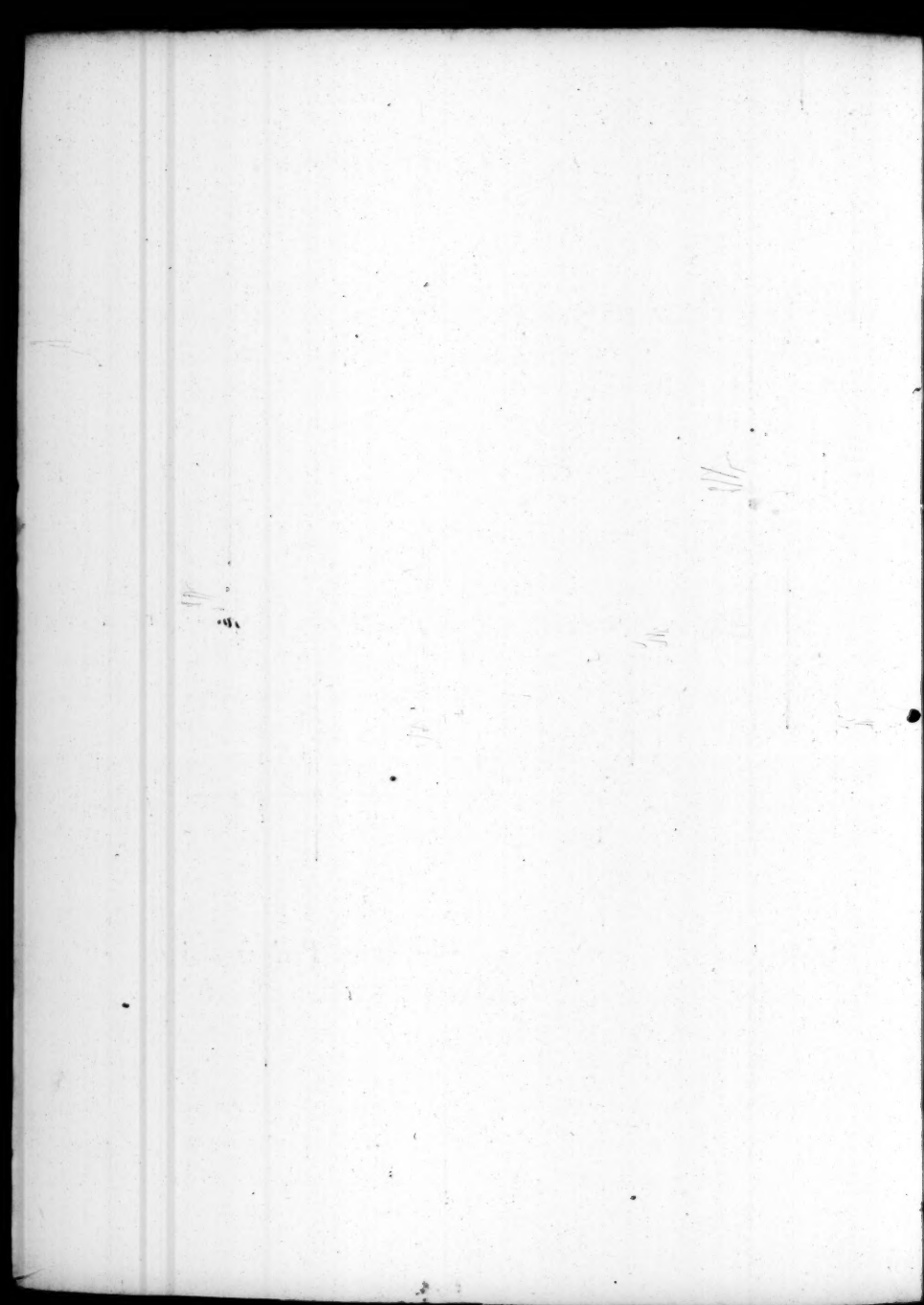


By *JOHN SHOWER.*

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N ;

Printed for *B. Aylmer*, at the *Three Pidgeons* in
Cornhill ; and *J. Lawrence*, at the *Angel* in
the *Poultrey*. 1696.



TO
The Right Honourable
WILLIAM
Earl of *PORTLAND*, &c.

My Lord,

THE knowledge I had, during my abode in Holland, of your Lordships great Candor and Goodness, in which I am abundantly Confirmed by the whole Course of your Actions, since you became a Peer of England, and have had a great share in the Administration of our Affairs. has encouraged me to hope, that your Lordship will not be displeased with the humble Address I make to you of this Discourse. And I am still the more emboldn'd to think so, when I consider, that the Occasion of it was the late happy and wonderful Deliverance of His Majesty's Person; whose immediate Servant you are, and to whom you have ever shown the most profound Respect, the most perfect Loyalty, and the most entire Affection; as likewise of this whole Nation, to whose Religion, Laws, and Liberties your Lordship hath ever appear'd so sincere a Friend; and which were lately in great Danger of being entirely destroyed.

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

My Lord, I would humbly ask your Lordships Pardon for not enlarging on the several Eminent Vertues, which compose your Illustrious Character, was I not assured that one noble Part of that Character, is your Lordships Abhorrence of every thing that looks like Flattery, especially from a Divine, whose Addresses to Persons in so high a Station as your Lordships, ought above all others, to be Chast and Modest.

My Business, My Lord, is of another nature, 'tis not to tell the World what Vertues you possess, but humbly to press you to Perseverance. 'Tis to remind you, that your own Life was in danger next to that of your Royal Master. And therefore I cannot but humbly and earnestly intreat, and beseech you, both for his Majesty's sake, and your Own, and for the sake of the Protestant Interest, and the Civil Liberties throughout Europe, as well as in these Kingdoms, frequently to Consider, that as it hath pleased God to watch over His Majesty's precious Life with unwearied Care, and hath now so lately in so miraculous a manner protected Him, and his Subjects from the dreadful Dangers to which they were exposed, so there is nothing but Serious Religion, and Practical Godliness can secure the Continuance of the Divine Presence and Protection, and prevent the like or worse Evils. Which that it may please God to do, shall be the sincere and daily Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most humble
and most obedient Servant

John Shower.

ISAIAH LXvi. 10.

*Rejoyce ye with Ferusalem, and be glad
with her all ye that love her : Rejoyce
for joy with her, all ye that mourn with
her.*

THE Solemnity of a National *Thanksgiving*, or *Fast*, when all the People of the Land are summoned by Authority to Rejoyce before the Lord, or to Humble themselves, carries something in it very Awful, and must needs be attended with very good or ill Effects of a Publick Consequence. It hath a tendency to honour God, and obtain his Favour; or will displease and provoke him the more, according as the Duty of the Day is Religiously observed, or neglected. If the Providence of God be heartily acknowledged and own'd in our late Deliverance, we may hope he will give us further Occasion of *Thanksgiving*. We have otherwise all these Judgments to fear, which the vilest Ingratitude, added to our other Sins, can challenge, or bring upon us. Therefore, *let all who love Ferusalem, now rejoyce with her, and be glad with her*, with that Seriousness and Integrity, as becomes a People who are saved of the Lord.

I shall not critically enquire, whether the particular Occasion of Joy referred to in this Prophecy, was the sudden and wonderful Deliverance of *Judæa* and *Ferusalem* by *Judas Maccabæus*, or the welcom Summons which the Jews received by the Proclamation of *Cyrus*, to return out of *Babylon*, and rebuild their City and Temple; nor how

far this Prophecy may extend farther to the Appearance of the *Messiah* in our World, and the surprising Change that was every where made by the Publication of the Gospel. 'Tis sufficient to my present purpose, that here is a Call to more than ordinary Rejoycing, upon the Occasion of some Special Deliverance, and Publick Blessing, which in many of its Circumstances mention'd in the Context, do very well suit to the Mercy of this Day.

Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem, all ye that love her. Jerusalem, the City of the Great King; God is known in her Palaces; he is in the midst of her; there his Name is recorded; there was his Temple on *Mount Sion*, the Place of his solemn Worship; there he vouchsafed his special Presence, communicated his Light and Grace, and commanded the Blessing even life for evermore. *Jerusalem* imports a Vision of Peace, and so carries Civil and Temporal Prosperity as Matter of Rejoycing, when the Designs of Enemies to destroy that Peace are disappointed. But as it was the Seat of the True Religion, the Place, where *Jehovah* was known and worshipped, it is to be considered as representing the Church of God in all Ages; which is sometimes stiled the *Israel of God*, and sometime express'd by *Mount Sion*, and *Jerusalem*.

Let all that Love Jerusalem, Rejoyce. All, who are not merely concerned for the Temporal Advantages of this Deliverance, but are hearty Friends to the True Religion and worship of God, professed among us, as Christians and Protestants. Let them rejoyce, and *Tou that mourned for her, be glad with her.* You, who have mourned, when she hath been in danger or oppress'd; when her Adversaries have been Chief, when her Solemn Assemblies were shut up or reproached, to whom that Reproach was a Burthen: *Rejoyce, and be glad with her*, for the Preservation of our Religion, which upon the Murther of the

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the *King*, and the succesful Invasion of *French Papists*, we could not expect to have long enjoyed. Rejoyce in the Continuance of that Purity and Liberty of the Worship of God, which you would have mourn'd for the loss of : *Let all that love Jerusalem, rejoyce with her.*

Publick National Deliverances and Blessings, require Solemn, Extraordinary Rejoycing, and Thanksgiving from all who love the Peace and Prosperity of *Jerusalem*, and would mourn for the want of it. There are divers things mentioned in this Verse and the foregoing, which contribute to make Publick Deliverances a fit Occasion of extraordinary Joy : As,

First, There is mention of the Hatred and Envy of their Brethren, which they were saved from, *ver. 5. Your Brethren who hated you, and cast you out for my names sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.* Brethren, either by Country, or Profession of Religion. They hated them, or at least joyned with those that did so. They would have cast you out of their Cities, and some of you out of the World, as Hereticks and Rebels, or both, under the pretence of Right and Religion : *For my names sake, saying, Let the Lord be glorified ;* as thinking therein they did God Service. And there is reason to believe, that whatever Mischief and Destruction our Enemies had brought upon us, they would have said, 'tis according to the Law of God, and for his Glory : You are disobedient to Authority ; you rejected your Rightful King, and instead of restoring him, you swore Allegiance to another. Let God be glorified in your deserved Ruine. Or else, *Let God be glorified ;* may be considered as a Proverbial Speech used in scorn. These are the Men that pretended to be so much for the Glory of God, more than others ; and thought their Cause had more of Right and Justice in it, and was the Cause of God. Now let him be glorify'd,

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let him decide it, let us see for whom God will appear. *But he hath appeared for our joy, and they shall be ashamed,* as it follows in the same Verse.

Another ground of Rejoycing, in this Context, is an Intimation of the bloody Intentions of the Adversaries of *Jerusalem*, which God prevented, and turned upon themselves. *ver. 6. A Voice of noise from the City, a Voice from the Temple, a Voice of the Lord, that renders Recompence to his Enemies.* If they delight in War, they shall thereby be punished; if they thirst for Blood, they shall have their Recompence that way. All things in Church and State, in City and Temple, they would have brought into Confusion by their Conspiracy; but now there is from *both* a Voice of Recompence, and *Revenge*; I say, *Revenge*, so far as the Word of God, and the Laws of the Land will allow, *Rom. xiii. 4.* And no further can we reasonably interpret the sence of that Word.

There is likewise the Speed and Ease of the Deliverance, without much difficulty and struggle for it, *ver. 7.* They were surprized with Salvation, before they were aware of their Danger; which is set forth by the Delivery of a Woman before her Travail, and without Pain. The Adversaries of *Jerusalem* were so many, so powerful, politick, combin'd, resolved, and desperate, that it hath been frequently said by very sensible and considering Men, that if ever this Nation was established and preserved, if ever the King's Throne be settled and secured, from his and our Enemies abroad and at home, it would cost us dear; there must be some struggle first in *England*; it could not reasonably be expected without Blood. Rejoyce therefore with *Jerusalem*, be glad with her; *for before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pains came, she was delivered.*

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This is further amplified in the Extent, as well as Speed of the Deliverance, *v. 8.* *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?* Cardinal Pool, in a Letter to Pope *Julius* the 3^d, makes use of this passage, and applies it to the sudden spreading of Popery over *England*, in the days of *Queen Mary the First*; I hope we may with serious thankfulness, much better apply it to the present Deliverance: Who hath heard such a thing, such a base, cursed Conspiracy, in all the Parts and Circumstances of it? And who hath seen such things, in that it was so graciously and seasonably prevented.

But what was already hinted is the most considerable; that it was the Peace of *Jerusalem*, and the Prosperity of *Sion*, for which we are to rejoyce. 'Tis a Deliverance, wherein the True Religion and Worship of God, and the Eternal Salvation of the Souls of Men is greatly concerned: This we are principally to regard. For they, who consider, for how little while this World is to last, as to any one Generation of Men; and how great Changes all Persons and Societies are liable to, and what strange Revolutions the Sovereignty of Providence doth make in every Age, throughout the Kingdoms of the World, and will thereupon give themselves leave to think, must see how little we are, or need be concerned, either as to Joy or Sorrow, if there be no other Life or World but this. If our very Being is to be Extinguish'd with our Life, and there be nothing to hope or fear beyond the Grave; but we may be indifferent what Religion is uppermost, or whether there be any; they, who consider these things as Christians, that believe or expect a future State, will soon perceive, that we are chiefly to Rejoyce or Mourn, as to what comes to pass, so far as the True Religion, and the Welfare of
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it, to far as the Souls of Men, our own, or others, with respect to the other World, are concerned.

Without attending to this we may frequently Rejoyce in the outward Shell or Carcass of a Mercy, while we neglect or over-look, what is the principal part of it, and so rob God of his Glory, and our selves of the Benefit of such a Providence, by fixing our Eyes only on the External part of the Blessing.

That, which I design to discourse of from these words, shall be under Three Heads. To show, First, That the Providence of God doth more peculiarly discover it self in some Publick and National Deliverances above others, which are therefore worthy of more special Observation, Thanksgiving, and Joy. Secondly, That the Deliverance, we are called this Day to be Thankful for, is of that sort, and hath distinguishing Characters of the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence. Thirdly, I shall endeavour to Excite you to Thanksgiving and Rejoycing, and direct you to make the best Improvement of what God hath done for us.

First, The Providence of God doth more peculiarly discover it self in some Publick and National Deliverances above others. We are altogether unworthy of the most common, and ordinary favours of Heaven; we are less than the least of his Mercies: But in some Blessings God appears more in his Glory, more signally Exalts and Honours himself, and displays his Perfections to every ones view; and doubtless our Rejoycing and Thanksgiving is expected, according to the Excellence and Endearing Circumstances of the Benefits we Receive. As there are some Sins, that for their horrid Guilt and heinous Aggravations, are above the Rate of ordinary Crimes, and not to be named without Abhorrence, that would even defile the Lips of a Christian to utter them, and a modest Ear to hear them

them recited; and some Judgments are so full of Wonders, that the very hearing of 'em will make Men's Ears to tingle? so are there some Mercies and Deliverances, that cannot easily be paralld, that have few Equals in History, that oblige all Beholders to say, *this is the Lord's doing, and should be marvellous in our Eyes*. Such was that reckon'd by Ezra, Ch. ix. 13. After God hath given us *such a Deliverance as this*. Such a Deliverance as few Ages afford Examples of the like; such as we can hardly find Words fit to express the Kindness, the Wisdom, the Righteousness, and Seasonableness of it; such, as we ought to be most deeply affected with, such as should never be forgotten, but the Memorial of it preserved to future Generations. *After God hath given us such a deliverance as this*.

'Tis upon this account we are often exhorted to examine, and search into, and consider with Attention such Works of God; to ponder upon them, to view them distinctly in all their Circumstances, and Consequences; that of every part we may be able to say, *who knows not that the Hand of the Lord hath wrought this*. Our Rejoycing and Thanksgiving cannot otherwise be answerable to the Greatness of our Mercies.

And no instances of Divine Providence call us more loudly to extraordinary Rejoycing and Praise, than when we observe his care of *Jerusalem*, his going in his Sanctuary, his Government and Preservation of his People in the midst of their Enemies; that the burning Bush is not consumed, that the Gates of Hell do not prevail, that the Plots and Powers of their Enemies are broken in pieces, that he takes the Wise in their own craftiness, and befools the Politicians and great Men of the World, who take Counsel together, and it comes to nought, who form the Design, and speak the Word, and resolve upon the Execution,

Execution, but their Plot fails, and the thing they intended is turned another Way; God is honoured, and his People preserved by their Disappointment; and they fall into their own Pit, and are insnar'd by the Work of their own Hands. In such cases we should rejoyce with *Jerusalem*, and be glad with her.

And never is such a Deliverance or Preservation more remarkable; than, when the Danger was so great and near, that nothing but a wonderful Interposal of Providence could prevent it. When there was but an hairs breadth between us and Ruine: When the Enemy was coming in like a Flood, and none aware of it: then for God to lift up a Standard against them. When they said in their Hearts, and to one another, *now is the Time*, now we will Surprize, Invade, Pursue, Overtake, divide the spoil, and satisfy our Lusts upon them.

Then doth God arise, and appear in his Glory, he puts on Righteousness as a Breast-plate, and an Helmet of Salvation on his Head, and the Garments of vengeance for clothing, *lix. Isai. 17.* When he saw there was no Helper, but Destruction was at the Door, then he steps in to crush the Cockatrices Egg before it break forth into a fiery flying Serpent. There is a Majesty, a Glory, a Beauty, a peculiar Excellency in such Works of God, that call us to rejoyce with *Jerusalem*.

This is no unusual Method of Divine Providence to appear at such a Time; when the *Israelites* had the Red Sea before them, and the *Egyptian* Armies at their Backs; when Dangers seem'd insuperable, and Matters past Recovery by humane Help; when the Ship is cover'd with the Waves, and ready to sink, then to glorifie his Mercy, and honour his Justice by the seasonable succour of his People: when the murdering Knife is just at their Throats, or the Dagger at their Breasts, when their
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Neck is as it were on the Block, and the Hand lifted up to give the Blow : when the Train is laid, and the March lighted, and the Enemy just ready to give fire to it. When the Adversaries of *Jerusalem* were ready to say, and did say it, the Conspiracy is so form'd, it can't fail, the Plot is so laid, it can't be defeated ; the Design is so deep, it can't be discovered, the Confederacy is so strong it can't be broken : Then God unravels all as in a Moment, demolishes all their little *Babel*, covereth them with shame and Confusion, and punisheth the designed Actors of the Tragedy, when just on the Execution of their Malice. Their *Destruction and Fear comes together* ; it overtakes them, before they have time to fear it : They are cut down as Grass, and quenched as Tow, and driven away as Chaff before the Wind. So have we lately seen it in the City of our God. *Rejoyce therefore with Jerusalem all ye, that love her.* That we have a great deal of Reason for extraordinary Joy and Thanks on this Occasion, is that which I am further to show. Therefore

II. Let us consider the Greatness of our Mercy in the Preservation of the King's Life, and the Disappointment of the *French* Invasion. A Deliverance that hath a Treasure, a Mine of Blessings Contained in it. Our Peace, Liberty, Estates, Lives, Religion, are all comprehended. We are saved from all those Miseries and Mischiefs (to our selves or Posterity) that would attend the Success of the *French* Forces, to make us Slaves and Papists. And as all the Reformed Churches abroad, all the Protestants in the World, have their eyes upon us as the most considerable People of their Religion, they must rejoyce in our Prosperity as their own, because from our Ruine they may conclude, and expect their own soon after to follow. And the Confederate Princes our Allies would quickly be master'd by *France*, if *England* were once subdued : They

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could not very long out-live us. On that Supposition, whither could *English* Protestants flee for Refuge? we must either die at Home, or seek a Shelter in the *Indies*, if we could tell how to get thither. When I mention only *England*, I exclude not *Scotland* and *Ireland*, as sharing with us in our publick Joys or Sorrows.

There are such notorious Instances of the French Barbarity in this present War, as to many Towns and Cities in *Germany* and the *Netherlands*; and we know so much (or may) of their Envy, Rage, and desired Revenge against our Nation in particular, especially having the Catholick Cause to advance by it, and the pretence of restoring an injured Prince to colour their Fury, that our Joy in the Disappointment of their late Conspiracy should be most unfeigned, and more than ordinary: *We are saved from the Hands of strange Children, from the Hands of them that hate us, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right-hand is a right-hand of falsehood.* Therefore let us sing unto the Lord a new Song, Psal. 144. 9, 10. That they hate us is evident, they will not suffer any of our Religion to dwell in their Country: What an incredible Number of the Native Subjects of *France* have been banisht, imprison'd, starv'd, hang'd, tortur'd, and are now in the Gallies only for being stedfast in owning that Faith which we profess. And can we think they would be more indulgent and kind to us, if they had prevailed here? that any English Protestant should so imagine, as thereupon to be willing to assist the French Invasion, is one of the most unaccountable things of this Age.

Shall I need to tell you of the many Protestant Temples they have demolish'd, and laid in Ashes? Or of the many Thousands of our Brethren, whose Blood cries to Heaven for Vengeance against them? Or of the effectual Care they have taken by their late Severity and Persecution,

tion, that we may never *again* reproach them with the Massacree of above *Seventy Thousand* Protestants in *France*, in the space of *Thirty Days* (as *An. 1572.*) because they resolve to leave none of our Religion in their Dominions? And would not the same Spirit and Principles desire as much, to leave never a Protestant in *England*, if e'er it should be in their Power to effect it? For whatever some few of our deluded Countrymen may be supposed to hope, an Army of French and Irish Papists, under the Management of Jesuitical Counsels would have aim'd at, and been satisfied with nothing less, than the Extirpation of the Protestant Religion.

To this Hellish Design, the Murder of *our Gracious Sovereign* was to lead the way: The Light of our *Israel* to be barbarously extinguish'd: And He, who had so often dar'd all their Courage and Strength in the Field, was in cool Blood to be Assassinated by a Company of *Russians*: And so *the shield of the mighty to be vilely cast away, like the shield of Saul, as if he had not been anointed with oyle*, 1 Sam. i. 21. What Consternation, what Confusion, what Trembling would the first Tidings of it have diffused through this City and Nation? Suppose this City then to have been fired in several places; The *Exchequer, Tower, Banks, Magazines*, and publick Stocks to have been all seiz'd or rifl'd; and the principal Protestants of all Professions to have been secur'd or murder'd; who can express the Horror of this dismal Scene? and since this cannot be imagined to have been brought to pass without great Opposition, what a bloody Theatre might one part of this City have been, while the other was in Flames? What Calls and Outcries by some to kill and destroy? what confused Shrieks and Groans from others to beg for Pity? Some hiding themselves and perishing by Fire, others hastening to flee, and meeting Death by the Sword:

Some crying aloud to spare such a Relation, and not to kill such a Friend, my Child, my Wife, my Father, my Brother; calling, I say, to *French Souldiers*, who understand not what you say in *English*, or to *Irish Cut-throats*, who would not heed it, or to hardened *Tory English*, who would regard it as little as either. Thus through the Wrath of God, and the rage of Men, the Treachery of some, and the Cruelty of others, the Land would have been darkened, and the People thereof Fewel of the Fire, and no Man to spare his Brother, *Ephraim* against *Manasse*, and *Manasse* against *Ephraim*, and both devour *Judah*; according to the Threatning, *Jer. 13. 14. I will dash them one against another, even the Father and the Sons together, saith the Lord, I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but I will destroy them.*

But, Thanks be to God, we have not yet felt their Rage, or fallen a Prey to their Teeth, whose tender Mercies are cruel. We have not heard the Ratling of their prepared Arms, the Neighing of their Horses, or the Noise of their Amunition, nor (as the Consequence of their Attempt) have we heard the Cries and Groans of our wounded, pilaged, ravished, undone Neighbours, or they ours; I leave you to consider in your own Thoughts, what horrid Effects the Assassination of the KING, and a *French Invasion* must have produced. The Subject is too big for ordinary Words: I could even stand silent a while, and leave you time to wonder, that you might the better rejoice at our astonishing Deliverance. But I am to assist your Thankfulness and Joy, by the mention of some Particulars which deserve to be remembred.

After mighty Preparations which were made in *France*, wherein several thousand Hands were imployed for some great, but secret Enterprize, He who was at that Charge, presumed doubtless it would answer and quit the Cost,
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and that he went upon a good Bottom, to look for Success ; and yet while KING WILLIAM was alive and in *England*, they could not reasonably expect it, being a valiant and a beloved Prince ; and the Parliament sitting : The *Assassination* therefore must precede and usher in the *Invasion* ; which seemed altogether to depend upon the KING's being taken off : So that they who were at such Expence for the one, can never be supposed ignorant or disinclined as to the other : However, it is not now for their *Honour* or *Interest* to avow it.

For certain not for their *Honour* ; because the *Assassination* of Princes being so great a Violence to human Nature, hath ever been abhorred by all Nations ; I could never hear of one Book or Pamphlet written to vindicate such a thing, either before or after. If any pretend there is such an one in our own Language, it ought rather to be accounted as an Essay of Wit, than a designed Treatise on that Subject. According to the Laws of *England*, (which are more gentle and human, than it may be any in the World, as appears by the fair and equal way of our trying Criminals ;) it is not lawful to kill a Man, tho' he be out-lawed, tho' he be convicted of Felony, Murder, or Treason, either by the Verdict of a Jury, or his own Confession ; no, not though he were actually condemned ; it were Murder for any to put him to Death, except the proper Officer, in pursuance of a Legal Process. But there is Malice and Treachery added to Injustice, to lie in wait to kill a Man who suspects no Danger, much more to kill a Prince, and one who hath deserved so well of *Europe* ; who is so justly honoured and beloved in the Nation, and hath so often hazarded his Life for us : A Prince, who, notwithstanding all the pretended Cavils, his Enemies have made against his Right to the Crown, must be owned to be of a Royal Family, and descended from Ancestors
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who had a great Hand in Delivering the *Netherlands* from the *Spanish* Tyranny; and helpt to put them into that Condition, with respect to Trade and Power, as to be able to Cope with most Monarchies in *Europe*. And this may be further said, that before his Invitation hither by the People of *England*, he had the largest Fortune, the greatest Annual Income, descended to him from his Ancestors, of any Person, Prince, or Monarch in the World; excepting what arises by Taxes or Contributions from others: To Murder such a Prince must highly aggravate the Crime; and much more for any Protestant to be consenting to it, since he hath always owned himself to be of our Religion, and hath persisted in that Character, and acquitted himself of it, so as to favour and protect all that are Protestants, of other Nations, as well as of this. The Assassination of such an one, would have been so base a Villany, and so great a Calamity, that the preventing of it is a just occasion of exceeding Joy, to all that love *Jerusalem*.

It is not to be overlook'd, that in the Detection and Disappointment of their Bloody Design, the Providence of God made use of the Counsels, Violence, and Treachery of our Enemies, more than of the Foresight and Vigilance of our Friends. He bowed the Hearts of some of the Conspirators to discover our Danger at home, as to the King's Life; and so helpt to interpret what was signified from abroad, of the vast Preparations the *French* were making for some great Enterprize. It is one special Method of God's governing this World, to influence the minds of Men to do, or not to do, what may most serve the Ends of his Glory. *I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by Bow or Sword, nor by Battel, nor by Horses, nor by Horsemen*, Hof. i. 7. The Honour of God seemed to be much concerned in our Preservation, lest his Providence should be thought to favour their Wickedness, and countenance the vilest Treachery and

and Murder : Especially after they had invoked his Blessing, by making many Prayers for their Success. A *Jubilee* also was open'd in *France*, just at that time, that the People might redouble their Prayers for a Blessing upon their Arms. And the *French* King set forth an Ordinance, by which all Masks, Balls, Plays, and other Divertisements were forbidden for Fifteen Days, that the People might be more at leisure to be Devout, and beg the Assistance of Heaven to favour this Enterprize, for our Destruction.

Let us further consider the Time and Season of this Conspiracy, and our Preservation. How cunningly on the part of the *French* Monarch, was the time adjusted to bring us into Confusion here, before he took the Field in *Flanders* ! And therefore the Conspirators had a time prefixt them in *February* to Assassinate the King, to make way for the Invasion. But God hath been gracious to us, in their Disappointment, by this very Circumstance of Time : For, being the beginning of the Spring, there is a better opportunity to follow and improve such a Deliverance all this Summer, both by Sea and Land. They chose a time likewise, when the Minds of Men here were most unquiet and disturbed, by reason of the Adulteration and Clipping of the Silver Coyn ; and when Divisions among Protestants, both in Church and State, ran very high, and so all were the more prepared for Ruine. But the Discovery of their Design, and the preventing of it, we hope, will help to unite the Nation ; and this favourable Providence towards the King, doth daily gain him, not only the Necks of his Enemies, but a greater Interest in the Hearts of his People. You see how the Nation repents his Deliverance ; how readily both City and Country, after the Example of the Heads of our Tribes in Parliament, have Associated for his Defence. That there was some Division amongst them, is a less wonder,

der, than that there should be no more. And Forreign Princes and Nations have taken Notice of our Deliverance, with Abhorrence of the Bloody Instruments and Assassins, and no less of Those who set them on work.

I might mind you of the easiness and Cheapness of the Deliverance as to us. If a *French* Army had Landed, and great Numbers of our false Brethren had joined with them; If they had burnt some Towns and Cities, and slain several Thousands who opposed them; yet if they had been Routed and Subdued, Defeated and Driven back, at last; there would have been cause of Thanksgiving and Joy, tho' we had Purchased the Victory with the loss of a great part of our Fleet, and with a great deal of *English* Blood and Treasure; tho' our Songs of Praise had been mixt with the Cries of the Widow and Fatherless, by reason of the many Slain; yet to be Preserved from *Po-pery* and *Slavery*, tho' at so dear a rate, would have called for our Rejoycing. But we knew not the Kings danger, or our own; we were saved without fighting; Our Deliverance came upon the Wings of Free Mercy; in answer only to Prayers in the general for the King and the Nation, which we were publickly called to make, at the beginning of this Parliament. And the Providence of God has now born Testimony to that despised method of preventing National Judgments. The *Jews* in the time of *Hester*, were wonderfully preserved from the malice of their Enemies; But what Prayers and Tears, and Fasting, and earnest Supplications, did the Queen, and *Mordecai*, and all the *Jews* make, to obtain it! Our Deliverance is vouchsafed us at an easier rate, and is not to be the less valued, but the more on that account.

But of all the Considerations to heighten our Gratitude, there is none should affect us more, than to think for what a Sinful, Unworthy People, God hath wrought this
great

great Salvation. He hath broke through all the Walls of Separation, that our Sins had put between us, and so signal a Mercy. You might rather have looked for the severest Expressions of his Anger, because of the many Warnings and Calls from Heaven which we have slighted, the many distinguishing Blessings we have mis-improved, Sinning the more presumptuously, and Dividing the more foolishly, under the highest Obligations to Reform and Unite. The Freeness and Undeservedness of the Mercy, to such a wicked People, and at such a time, adds to the Wonder of it. Let us ask from East to West, and consult the Days of old, the Records of ancient time, the Histories of other Countries, and see if ever God hath appeared more visibly, more gloriously, more frequently, for any Nation under Heaven, than he has for us. But we have sinned, and done wickedly, and rebelled against him with the highest Ingratitude; and so might have expected he should stir up all his Wrath against us, and say to us as to them, *Judg. 10. 13.* I have often delivered you from your Enemies, and yet you have provoked me still; Therefore *I will deliver you no more.*

Notwithstanding all this, he hath remembered Mercy, and saved us for his own Name's sake: When we might have fallen under swift Destruction, he surprized us with Kindness. He hath created *Jerusalem* a Rejoycing, and her People a Joy, and our Enemies are ashamed. They made haste to destroy, but God made haste to help. He that rides upon the Cherubs, and flies upon the Wings of the Wind, who makes the Clouds the Dust of his Feet, (that his Enemies see him not till he comes) He shoots at them with an Arrow, and suddenly are they wounded: He makes their own Tongues fall upon themselves, they are taken in their own Pit, and poisoned with their own Cup. As *Haman* of old, the great Conspirator against the Jews,

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was

was forced to eat of the Tree he had planted, preparing a Gallows of Fifty Cubits high for *Mordecai*, he and his ten Sons are hanged upon it.

The Day was fixed, the Place agreed on, the Undertakers resolved, and impatient, waiting the time : They had the Instruments of Death ready ; Every thing on their part was framed for the Bloody Deed : Their Hopes were strong, their Passions high, their Confidence great ; they question'd not to prevail ; they had no doubt of the Success. Their Accomplices expected the Signal on the other side of the Water, and we were fast asleep at Home ; in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and knew it not. But *Israel's* Keeper was awake for us : He hath broken the Snare, and we are escaped, and their designed Mischief returns upon their own Heads. *Rejoyce* therefore *with Jerusalem, all ye that love her* : You see there is Reason for it.

III. Let me now excite you to this, as your present Duty, and direct you how to improve what God hath done. We hope it is in Love to the King's Majesty, and in Kindness to the Nation, that God has thus preserved Him and us. *Because I have loved thee* (says God) *I have given Men for thee, and People for thy Life*, Isa.43.4. That is, If they conspire against thy Life, I will redeem it at the price of theirs. ' The King shall joy in thy ' strength, O Lord ; the Man whom thou hast made ' strong for thy self, in thy Salvation shall he greatly Re- ' joyce. It is God who gives Salvation unto Kings, he ' delivered *David* his Servant from the hurtful Sword, ' he hath lifted up his Head above his Enemies ; There- ' fore we will offer Sacrifices of Praise, and heartily re- ' joyce in the strength of our Salvation. Our Enemies ' imagined a vain thing, they took counsel together against ' the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us wait ' for

' for Blood ; Let us lurk privily for the innocent Life ; Let
' us swallow them up alive, as the Grave ; We shall find
' all precious Substance ; We shall fill our Houses with
' Spoil. But he that sits in the Heavens has laughed them
' to scorn, the Lord has had them in derision : He hath
' made the Counsels of the Wicked Foolishness, and scat-
' tered the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts. O
' come and see the Works of the Lord ! Not what Defo-
' lations he hath made in the Earth, but prevented in our
' Land. Thou hast made us glad through thy Works,
' therefore we will rejoyce in the Works of thy Hands.
' Thou hast made our Enemies Lyars, and been the God
' of our Salvation. They travailed with Mischief, and
' brought forth a Lye. — And many of them are
made *Lyars* in another sence, by a forced Submission,
and a feigned Subjection to his Authority, whose Right
they disown, and whose Destruction they would not have
been sorry for.

It ought not to check or lessen our Joy this day, that
our Deliverance is not compleat, that we are yet engaged
in War : This will not excuse us from Thankfulness for
what God hath done, but engage us to it. *After God hath
given us a Deliverance as this, said Ezra.* What mighty
Deliverance was that, for which he is so very thankful ?
You will find it was a Deliverance but in the Birth, in
the Shell : There was only a door of Hope opened, the
Captivity was not turned. A Proclamation was issued
out in their Favour, but they had great Difficulties yet to
wrestle with : They had open Enemies, many wicked
disaffected Persons amongst themselves : And they were
but a small Company, a poor Remnant. The Jews had lost a
greater number of Persons in some one Battle before their
Captivity, than were enrolled at their return out of
Babylon : And yet they rejoyced at the beginning of a

Mercy, and say, *Such, and so great a Deliverance* hath God given us.

Let us labour to value this Salvation, and be deeply affected with it, that we may be Thankful as becomes Christians. That we may not affront Heaven by our Hypocritical Praises; or regard more the Temporal Advantages of this Preservation, than what relates to our Souls, and our Religion.

There are many will clamour against *France* and *Rome*, and run down the Enemies of the present Government, express themselves warmly against the Conspirators, and especially the *Assassines*; and yet are Strangers to Religious Joy and Praise: There is no more Religion in their Thanksgivings, than in the ringing of the Bells, or in the making Bonfires, or discharging the Guns of the *Tower*, upon such an Occasion. But how may we best Improve this Deliverance?

I. Let us remember it, and never be Afraid of the Power, and Malice, and Confederacy of our Enemies. Let them Rage, and Resolve, Contrive and Plot as they please, God can easily discover and disappoint them. Fear them not, because they are Numerous and Powerful, for God is above them. Fear them not, because they are Cruel and Revengeful; for they cannot touch a Hair of your Heads without his leave. Fear them not, because of their Blasphemy and Wickedness, and that their Tongues are set on Fire of Hell: Fear them the less for this. *Let mine Enemy be as the Wicked; and he that riseth up against me, as the Ungodly.* Their Wickedness is our Advantage; it makes them weak, and us strong. Fear them not, by reason of their Combinations: Let them associate themselves, and they shall be broken to pieces. As mortal Men, we little need to fear them; and as wicked Enemies, much less. They are compared in Scripture, to this very purpose, to the most.

most fading and contemptible things, such as are most easily consumed; as Stubble devoured by a Flame; as Chaff scattered by the Wind; as Smoak out of the Chimney, which soon disappears; as the Fat of Lambs, which is easily melted; as the foam or froth of Water, that is presently dissolved. By what we have seen of God's defeating them, we should learn not to fear them.

2. Rejoyce in this Deliverance; and with your Praises, join earnest Prayer for the perfecting and improving of it. The Joy of the Lord for what he hath given, is our Strength to ask more. He hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad; *Our Mouth is filled with laughter, and our Tongue with singing*, Psal. 126. And it follows in the same Breath, *Lord, Turn our Captivity as the Rivers of the South*. Let us beg of God, that we may yet find favour in his sight, for our selves, and our distressed Brethren in other parts of the World; for our selves and our Posterity after us. And in particular, let us humbly intercede with God for *the King's Majesty*, that he may have a thankful sense of the Divine Care and Protection, and not, like *David, Solomon, and Hezekiah*, after wonderful Deliverances, forget the God of his Salvation. Let us pray earnestly for the Preservation of a Life, on which so much depends, as to us at home, and all the affairs of *Europe* abroad; and that what was told *Haman* concerning *Mordecai*, may be verified of the *Gallican* Prince and Power: *Esth. 6. 13. Thou hast begun to fall before Mordecai; and if he be of the Seed of the Jews, and the Lord be with him, thou shalt not prevail against him, but fall before him*. God seems to have begun the work of our Deliverance, by shaming our Enemies, let us beg that he would cut it short in Righteousness. Let us beseech him, that our Fleets may be Prosperous, and our Armies Victorious, and that there may soon be occasion of *neither* of them, by reason

son of an Honourable, Safe, and Lasting Peace. Let us beg, that God would animate the King with an Holy Courage, and Trust in the Protection of Heaven ; That he may be able to say with the Psalmist. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom shall I be affraid ? When the Wicked, even mine Enemies, came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Tho' an Host should encamp against me, my heart should not fear, Tho' all Nations compass me about, yet in the Name of the Lord I will destroy them. The God of my mercy shall prevent me, and let me see my desire upon mine Enemies. I will go in the strength of the Lord, the Lord shall help me, and deliver me from the wicked, and save me, because I trust in him.*

This is our great Concern , to ingage the Presence of God with us. If he be on our side, we have nothing to fear ; As without it, all our Preparations for abroad, and all our Associations at home, will avail little. When *Jebosaphat* had an Army of eleven hundred and sixty thousand men, besides his Garrisons , he owns God alone able to defend him. *O Lord, says he, we have no might against this great company that comes against us , neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are unto the Lord, 2 Chron. 20. 12.* Eleven hundred and threescore thousand fighting men in the field, and yet *no might*, but God alone must be the Author of Preservation and Victory.

If he will fight for us, he can thresh the Mountains small by a Worm. No matter whether the Weapon be a Sword, or the Jaw-bone of an Ass, if his Hand wield it. He can take a Fortified City, or a Garrisoned Castle, by Earthen Pitchers, and Trumpets of Rams Horns, as easily as by Bombs and Mortars, by Sword and Spear, and a Train of Artillery. Every thing shall make for us, if he be on our side ; The Plots, the Rage, the Cruelty,

Cruelty, the Multitude of our Enemies shall forward his Work; Yea, the Weakness, the Faults, the Errors, the Divisions of his own Servants shall promote it. *If God be for us, who can be against us to any purpose?* Let us therefore follow this Deliverance with earnest Prayer for the Perfecting of it.

3. Improve it as an Argument of Trust and Confidence for the future: former Deliverances are a kind of Obligation on the Honour of God to work more. This was often urged by *Moses* on the behalf of the *Israelites*, after they were brought out of *Egypt*. His Power and Goodness are unchangeable; and our Experience of what he hath done for us, should encourage us to hope that he will yet deliver. Let Winds and Waves be never so tempestuous, we may trust his Care and Conduct; though our Enemies rage and threaten, we may trust the God of our Salvation, that he will appear for our Joy, and they shall be ashamed: *He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth stretcheth forth his Hands to swim*, Isa. 25. 11. They can no more resist his Power, than the Waters can resist a Man that swims; who easily with his Hands divides them hither and thither, to serve his own purpose, and carry him to his designed place.

All Power in Heaven and Earth is in the hand of our Redeemer; and he hath an Interest in this World, that shall live, notwithstanding all Storms: The Waves may cover the Ship, but it shall arise; it cannot sink, for he himself is in it. The truly Christian Interest shall be preserved, and God will shake Heaven and Earth, and all Nations, that the desire of all Nations may come. He holds the Scepter in his Hand, and rules over all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and changeth the Government
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and Governors thereof, as he pleases. He is never out of his way, to accomplish his own Counsels, and fulfil his Word. He led *Israel* in a right way, to a City of Habitations, though by a Journey of Forty Years, that might have been dispatcht in less than ten Days, *Psal.* 107. 7. but it was the right way to *Canaan*: For if they had not thus avoided the Land of the *Philistines*, they had never got safe to the promised Land.

4. Let us express our Joy and Thankfulness to God, by promoting *Reformation* and *Union* among our selves. As to the former, let us fear the Lord and his Goodness: He that offereth Praise, doth not glorify him, except he order his Conversation aright. *Seeing our God hath given us such a Deliverance as this, should we again break his Commandments, would he not be angry with us till he had consumed us?* The Language of Divine Providence towards us in *England*, hath been kindly inviting us to Repentance; *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim!* I would fain save you, and establish you, and make you a Praise in the Earth, and the Glory of all Nations: But you will not be healed, you will not be purged, you will not be reformed, you will not know the way of Peace and Holyness.

If Personal and Family Reformation were the happy Fruit of what God has done for us, with what Gratitude and Joy would future Ages commemorate the Blessings of this Day; with what Love and Honour will the Name of *KING WILLIAM* be mentioned by us, and our Posterity after us? how readily shall we obey him? how sincerely and fervently pray for him! how courageously fight for him, if called to do so; or cheerfully contribute to the Charge of it, that others may?

The like may be said for *Union* among *Protestants*. Is it not high time for all of us, who take the Holy Scriptures for the only Rule of our Faith, Desires, and Duty, and so have but one objective Religion, to reckon our selves but of *one Church*? and every one to endeavour to live better, and to promote serious Godliness amongst others? Without this, though there should be no Foreign War we shall have no Peace at home: God may justly dash us one against another, till we are consumed one of another. And after so many Years Experience of the mischievous Consequence of our Divisions, we shall be the most inexcusable of all People in the World, if we do not resolutely endeavour to unite.

Let me enforce all by two Considerations. 1. That if we abuse this Deliverance, and will not know the things of our Peace; the Clouds may return after the Rain, and make more and worse Storms. God may be weary of Repenting, if we do not Repent: He may bring us low for our Iniquities, and sell us into the Hands of them that hate us, and cause us to drink the Dreggs of the Cup of his Anger. If being so often reprov'd and warn'd, delivered and saved, by repeated Wonders of Providence, we will still harden our Hearts; what can we expect, but to be destroyed, and that without Remedy? If we are solicitous only for Civil Peace and Liberty, for Trade and Riches, and outward Prosperity; God can quickly disappoint us of all these, by Methods as unexpected and surprizing, as our late Deliverance. What a Salvation had the *Jews* in the time of *Hezekiah*, from the *Assyrian* Involence and Force! And yet, because of their Ingratitude, their City was afterward burnt with Fire, their Temple destroyed, and the People carried captive into a strange Land.

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Many are awake so far, as to ask the Question that we read in the Burden of *Duma*, *Isa.* 21. 11, 12. *Watchman, what of the Night? Watchman, what of the Night?* And the same Answer may be made, *The Morning cometh, and also the Night.* If you will inquire, inquire; Return, Come. We are apt to say, When will the Morning come? When will these Clouds be over? When will this tedious impoverishing War be ended? Shall we always live in Fear and Terror? Is there no Prospect, no Approach of full Deliverance, Peace and Settlement? But remember, If the Morning of Deliverance come from your present Fears; the Night will also return, except you inquire wisely, and return to the Lord. Your Danger is not over, or like to be, unless you make God your Friend, and return to him with all your Heart.

I am far from prescribing Limits to the Divine Patience: But to what is it owing, but to the Sovereignty of his Goodness, that he hath saved us hitherto? We dare not say of our Brethren, who were our Warnings, that they were greater Sinners than we: And yet God hath said it, that *Except we repent, we shall likewise perish.* If we abuse his Kindness, he will turn to be our Enemy, and consume us, after he has done us good, *Josh.* 24. 20.

'Tis not the Strength and Situation of any Country, though defended by Rocks and Mountains, though guarded and encompassed by the Sea; It is not the Numbers or Courage of our Soldiers or Commanders; It is not the Policy of our States-men, be they never so Wise or Faithful; 'Tis not the Weakness or Wickedness of our Enemies, whatever we may think of them; Nor our external Relation to God, by the Profession of the true Religion; Nor the Righteousness of the Cause we are engaged

gaged in, as to the present War ; Nor any former or late Appearances of God for us, against our Enemies ; None of these things, nor all of them together, can be a sufficient ground of Confidence concerning our Safety, if we abuse the Goodness and Patience of God, and will not seek the things that make for Purity and Peace.

Lastly, That I may close with something hopeful and encouraging, as suitable to this Day ; Consider, That the wise Improvement of what God hath done for us, may be the Earnest and Fore-runner of many more, and greater Blessings to the Nation. And this the words before and after the Text call us to observe. Shall I bring to the Birth, and shall I not cause to bring forth ? saith the Lord. And when I have begun to bring Deliverance, shall I shut the Womb ? saith your God, ver. 9. He will go on to compleat our Establishment, if we our selves do not hinder it. Rejoyce therefore with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her. And it follows, ver. 11, 12. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the Breasts of her Consolation. For thus saith the Lord, I will extend peace to her like a River, and the Glory of the Gentiles like a flowing Stream : As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem : Your Heart shall rejoyce, and your Bones shall flourish like an Herb : And the Hand of the Lord shall be known towards his Servants, and his Indignation towards his Enemies.

Who can tell, if we are not Unthankful, but that Seven Years to come, may carry us as far beyond the present Thoughts either of our Friends or Enemies, by new Wonders of Providence, as the last Seven Years hath done.

In

In the Accomplishment of what is foretold and promised in Scripture, God doth usually hasten his Work towards the latter end of it. He promised *Abraham* to multiply his Seed as the Stars of Heaven, to give him a numerous Posterity, who, after *Four Hundred Years*, should possess the Land of *Canaan*: Yet after *Two Hundred Years* of the *Four* were past, the Holy Seed were but Seventy Souls. But in much less time they grew to be above Six Hundred Thousand Fighting Men, besides Children. So great was the Disproportion of their Increase at the Beginning, and at the Latter End. And of the same Children of *Israel* it is observed, that in their *Forty Years* March through the Wilderness, they advanced more Ground, from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, in the last year, than in all the former *Thirty Nine*. So may God do, and we hope he will, as to all those things which concern the latter Days, and are yet to come to pass.

FINIS.